

Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EUR-25 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-11 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03

SS-20 USIA-15 OMB-01 IO-14 CU-05 AID-20 PC-04 NEA-14

DRC-01 /178 W

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R 231225Z SEP 74

FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1179

INFO AMCONSUL ASMARA

UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 2 ADDIS ABABA 11430

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINS PINT PGOV ET

SUBJECT: LTGEN AMAN'S PRESS CONFERENCE: SELECTED Q AND A

REF: FBIS LONDON 20/1940 SEP74

SUMMARY. ALTHOUGH DEPARTMENT HAS SEEN REPORTS OF CHAIRMAN EPMG'S FIRST PRESS CONFERENCE SEPTEMBER 20, THERE FOLLOWS SELECTION OF PARTICULARLY NOTEWORTHY Q'S AND A'S (IN PART TRANSLATED FROM AMHARIC). END SUMMARY.

1. Q. WHAT IS THE FUTURE OF THE EMPEROR? WILL HE BE TRIED?

A. IT IS TOO EARLY TO SAY.

2. Q. WHAT ABOUT THE MONEY HE HAS OVERSEAS? WILL YOU GET IT BACK?

A. WE ARE TRYING. HE HAS REFUSED TO GIVE US THE RIGHT ANSWERS.

3. Q. HOW MANY ARE THERE IN THE MILITARY COUNCIL?

A. ONE HUNDRED TWENTY, RANGING FROM PRIVATE TO MAJ.

4. Q. ARE YOU THE CHAIRMAN OF THE MILITARY COUNCIL?

A. YES.

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5. Q. WILL THE CROWN PRINCE ACCEPT THE CROWN?

A. THE PROCLAMATION (SUMMONING HIM TO DO SO) WAS SENT TO HIM; WE HOPE TO HEAR FROM HIS SOON.

6. Q. IF THE CROWN PRINCE DOES NOT RETURN, WILL YOU FORM A REPUBLIC.

A. THAT DEPENDS ON THE ETHIOPIAN PEOPLE.

7. Q. WHAT IS THE IDEGOGY OF THE EPMG?

A. ETHIOPIA TIKDEM.

8. Q. WHAT IS YOUR REACTION TO STUDENT OPPOSITION TO THE MILITARY REFORM?

A. THE EPMG IS FOR ALL ETHIOPIANS. STUDENTS ARE ONLY A SMALL PROPORTION OF THE POPULATION. THE EPMG WILL TAKE ITS DECISIONS BASED ON ITS SENSE OF WHAT IS BEST FOR THE PEOPLE AND WHAT THE PEOPLE WISH.

9. Q. WILL WE BE ABLE TO SEE THE FORMER EMPEROR SOON?

A. WE SHALL SEE. THE EX-EMPEROR IS NOW A SIMPLE CITIZEN. WE CANNOT REVEAL HIS WHEREABOUTS FOR SECURITY REASONS.

10. Q. SUPPOSE THE CROWN PRINCE IS UNABLE TO ASSUME THE THRONE?

A. THE SITUATION WOULD STILL BE NORMAL.

11. Q. HOW ARE THE COUNCIL'S RELATIONS WITH CELU?

A. CELU IS LIKE THE STUDENTS, ONLY A FRACTION OF THE ETHIOPIAN PEOPLE. NO FRACTION WILL BE ALLOWED TO IMPOSE ITS VIEWS UPON THE ETHIOPIAN PEOPLE.

12. Q. WHAT ARE THE EPMG'S INTENTIONS TOWARDS ERITREA?

A. I EXPRESSED THEM THERE. WE WEEK A PEACEFUL SITUATION IN ERITREA AND THE PARTICIPATION OF ERITREANS. WE WILL CREATE A BETTER ADMINISTRATION THERE. THE PEOPLE ACCEPTED THE OFFER WE MADE TO THEM.

13. Q. WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE DETAINEES?

A. THEY ARE UNDER INVESTIGATION BY THE COMMISSION OF INQUIRY AND WILL BE TRIED UNDER MILITARY LAW.

14. Q. YOU REMOVED THE FEUDAL TOP LAYER, BUT FEUDAL ELEMENTS UNCLASSIFIED

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REMAIN IN THE PROVINCES. DO YOU INTEND TO REMOVE THEM TOO?

A. THE REVOLUTION CONTINUES. WE WILL GO ON UNTIL ALL HAVE ACHIEVED JUSTICE.

15. Q. WHAT IS THE SITUATION IN TIGRE, WHERE THE GOVGEN HAS NOT OFFERED SUPPORT?

A. I DON'T UNDERSTAND. WE HAVE THE SUPPORT OF TIGRE.

16. Q. WHAT ABOUT THE ALLEGED RESISTANCE OF RAS MENGESHA SEYOUM?

A. I HAVEN'T HEARD OF IT. TIGRE PROVINCE SUPPORTS US.

17. Q. WHAT IS YOUR ATTITUDE ABOUT THE MIDDLE EAST?

A. THE FOREIGN POLICY OF THE MOVEMENT IS AS WAS STATED.

WE WISH TO BE FRIENDS WITH THOSE WHO SHARE THE WATERS OF THE BLUE NILE, THE WABE SHEBELLE AND THE JUBA RIVERS. OUR FOREIGN POLICY WILL BE BASED ON OUR FRATERNAL TIES WITH THESE STATES AND OUR SUPPORT FOR THE OAU, WHICH HAS MANY ARAB MEMBERS. THIS WILL CONDITION OUR ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE MIDDLE EAST.

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18. Q. WILL THERE BE ANY CHANGE IN ETHIOPIA'S INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS?

A. WE SHALL KEEP OUR COMMITMENTS AND THE FRIENDLY RELATIONS WE HAVE ENJOYED. THERE WILL BE NO CHANGE BUT OUR NONALIGNMENT WILL BE THE BASIS OF OUR FOREIGN POLICY.

19. Q. WHAT KIND OF FOREIGN AID DOES EPMG EXPECT?

A. WE ACCEPT IT FROM ALL WHO WISH TO ALLEVIATE THE PROBLEMS AND SUFFERING OF ETHIOPIANS.

20. Q. DO YOU EXPECT ANY CHANGE IN THE SOURCE OF YOUR ARMAMENTS WHILE REMAINING UNALIGNED?

A. SO FAR I THINK WE HAVE THE SAME SOURCES. I HAVEN'T

SEEN ANY CHANGE YET.

21. Q. HAS THE NEW EPMG RECEIVED ANY FOREIGN RECOGNITION AS YET?

A. WE DO NOT THINK WE NEED IT. WE THINK WE ARE THE SOLE AUTHORITY IN ETHIOPIA AND THAT THE MOVEMENT IS SUPPORTED BY ETHIOPIANS. WE HAVE NO WORRIES.

22. Q. IS THERE ANY TRUTH TO THE RUMOR THAT THE CIA WAS CAUGHT RED-HANDED IN TRYING TO DISRUPT THE PURPOSE OF THE AFCC JUST PRIOR TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE MILITARY GOVERNMENT?

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A. I AM NOT AWARE OF ANY SUCH INFORMATION.

23/24. Q. THE PRESENT CHANGES HAVE BEEN OBTAINED BY THE ETHIOPIAN PEOPLE AND THE MILITARY. WHY SHOULD THE MILITARY BE RELUCTANT TO HAND OVER THE GOVERNMENT TO CIVILIANS?

A. WE ARE THE PEOPLE AND THE PEOPLE ARE THE MILITARY. AS IS SAID IN THE PROCLAMATION, PEOPLE OF DIFFERENT WALKS OF LIFE WILL BE ALLOWED TO PARTICIPATE AS ADVISERS. THUS THE PEOPLE CAN BE SAID TO BE PARTICIPATING IN GOVERNMENT.

25. Q. PLEASE CLARIFY: UNTIL NOW THERE HAS BEEN COMPLETE UNITY BETWEEN THE PEOPLE AND THE MILITARY, BUT SINCE CIVILIANS ARE NOT INCLUDED IN THE EPMG, IT IS CREATING AN ATMOSPHERE OF DOUBT AMONG THEM. WHY SHOULD NOT CIVILIANS PARTICIPATE IN THE EPMG?

A. CIVILIANS ARE PARTICIPATING IN THE EPMG. HOWEVER, I DO NOT WANT TO LIST THEM. WE WILL REVEAL THEIR IDENTITY IN DUE TIME. WE SHOULD ALSO BE AWARE THAT THE GOVERNMENT IS BEING ADMINISTERED BY A CIVILIAN CABINET.

26. Q. WHAT CAN YOU SAY ABOUT THE LITERACY CAMPAIGN?

A. WE WILL HAVE A NEW EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM FOR ETHIOPIA TO FIT ETHIOPIAN CONDITIONS. IT WILL BE A LITERACY PROGRAM AND WE WILL SOON EXPOSE IT IN DETAIL.

27. Q. ARE THE ARMED FORCES PREPARED TO USE FORCE TO IMPLEMENT LAND REFORM?

A. I DON'T BELIEVE IT WILL BE NECESSARY. PEOPLE HAVE CONFIDENCE IN OUR LEADERSHIP AND IT WILL BE PEACEFUL CHANGE.

28. Q. IT IS SAID THAT THE STUDENTS ARE TO GO UPCOUNTRY TO EXPLAIN THE MILITARY MOVEMENTS MOTTO, "ETHIOPIA FIRST." WILL THEY BE SENT VOLUNTARILY OR DO THEY HAVE TO GO?

A. THERE IS NO COMPULSION IN THE PROPOSAL. WE RECEIVE WITH OPEN ARMS THOSE WHO WANT TO DO THEIR PART OF THEIR OWN FREE WILL.

29. Q. THE STEPS SO FAR TAKEN TO NATIONALIZE CERTAIN

ENTERPRISES CREAED SUSPICION IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR. COULD
YOU EXPLAIN EPMG INTENTIONS TOWARD THE PRIVATE SECTOR?
A. I WOULD LIKE TO TELL EVERYONE THAT THE EPMG WILL NEVER
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ATTEMPT TO NATIONALIZE FOREIGN INVESTMENTS. NATIONALIZATIONS
TO DATE ARE DUE TO ROBBERY AND THE COMPLETE CONTROL (OF THESE
NATIONALIZED ENTERPRISES) OF THE ARISTOCRACY. WE DID WHAT
WE DID TO HELP IMPROVE THE ETHIOPIAN ECONOMY.

30. Q. IF THE EX-EMPEROR RETURNS THE MONEY HE AS ABROAD,
WILL YOU RELEASE HIM AND ALLOW HIM EXILE;
A. IT IS A PITY THAT AFTER ALL THE SUFFERING HERE AND
IN WOLLO, HAILE SELASSIE REFUSED AND SAID HE HAS NO MONEY
BUT WHAT HE GAVE HIS CHILDREN. I THINK IT IS UP TO THE
ETHIOPIAN PEOPLE TO DECIDE THIS RATHER THAN MYSELF.

31. Q. YOU SAID THE ETHIOPIAN PEOPLE WILL DETERMINE WHAT TO
DO WITH THE EX-EMPEROR. DO YOU MEAN HE WILL BE PUT ON TRIAL?
A. THE QUESTION IS PREMATURE. IT WILL DEPEND ON THE
ATMOSPHERE AND THE FEELING OF THE PEOPLE.

32. Q. DO YOU CONTEMPLATE THE CREATION OF NATIONAL POLITICAL
ORGANIZATIONS INCLUDING, BESIDES THE MILITARY, OTHER SEGMENTS
OF THE POPULATION?
A. THE PROCLAMATION SAID THAT THE AFCC IS ABOVE THE EPMG.
THEREFORE, THE MILITARY ARE IN POLITICS. WE HAVE RESPONSIBILITY,
BUT THE FUTURE OF POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS IN ETHIOPIA WILL
BE DETERMINED BY THE CONSTITUTION TO BE GRANTED (AND)
THROUGH LOCAL GOVERNMENTS.

33. COMMENTS TO FOLLOW BY SEPTTEL.
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